



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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State Health Commissioner

*Department of Health*  
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TO: Members of Virginia's Business Community

FROM: Karen Remley, MD, MBA, FAAP

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Remley".

DATE: May 4, 2009

SUBJECT: Influenza A H1N1 Outbreak

On April 27th, I declared a public health emergency in Virginia in response to the intensifying outbreak of influenza A H1N1. As you know, we now have three confirmed cases in Virginia, and more confirmed cases are likely. Fortunately, Virginia has a very strong public health system. Our pandemic flu preparedness and response plan was developed in close collaboration with numerous stakeholders, including representatives of the Commonwealth's business community. This plan has been frequently tested, exercised and evaluated. Our 35 local health districts, each led by an experienced public health physician, have developed strong relationships with businesses – both large and small - in their areas. The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) greatly values the partnerships that we have forged with the private sector in order to protect the health of their employees, vendors, customers and surrounding communities. We are prepared to respond effectively to this rapidly evolving public health emergency, and are doing so around the clock.

Virginia businesses likely have many questions concerning what this outbreak means for them and their employees, and how they should respond. VDH is well-equipped to be your best single point of contact within the Commonwealth for accurate answers to such questions, and to provide detailed information and guidance concerning the H1N1 outbreak. In addition to the information contained on the VDH website, [www.vdh.virginia.gov/](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/), I would encourage you and your employees to refer to more detailed information, guidance and recommendations on the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/). The CDC has issued guidance and recommendations on a wide range of topics related to the H1N1 outbreak, including face mask and respirator (i.e., the N-95) use in certain community settings where H1N1 influenza virus transmission has been detected <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/masks.htm>. The CDC has also issued guidance and recommendations related to travel. VDH is ready and willing to help you understand the wide range of guidance and recommendations that have been issued by the CDC. Another source of workplace planning information that businesses may find useful for preparedness and response purposes is <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/workplaceplanning/index.html>.

We encourage you to share with your customers the following simple, everyday steps that they can take to protect themselves and their families and friends. Review emergency plans at home and at

work. Wash your hands frequently. Cover your cough with a tissue or your arm. Stay home if you are sick. Individuals who think they need medical attention should call their health care providers in advance to allow them to take necessary infection-control actions.

VDH will continue to monitor this situation and will keep the business community informed. Thank you for your continued strong support and assistance. If you have additional questions, please contact either VDH's influenza information hotline at 1-877-275-8343, or your local health department.